

Best Practices in Elementary Writing Workshop Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher establishes predictable Writing Workshop structures and routines.	
	Approaching	Effective
Effective Classroom Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ LE4: Implements high, clear expectations for student behavior and appropriately responds to misbehavior ▶ LE5: Classroom resources and space reflect and promote students and their learning ▶ LE6: Manages student groups, transitions, and resources effectively 21st Century Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I14: Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving ▶ I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	<p>Teacher regularly implements Writing Workshop components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned mini-lessons (typically 15–20 minutes) based on DPS Units of Study and student needs as determined by observations. • Independent work time for extended periods where students write independently. • Individual conferences or small writing groups. • Sharing time where students share their writing or what they learned during Writing Workshops. 	<p>Teacher routinely implements Writing Workshop (typically 60 minutes or longer). Components of Writing Workshop include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned, focused, mini-lessons (typically 15–20 minutes) appropriate for supporting student understanding of elements and strategies for specific writing genres. Lessons are organized by units of study and include studying touchstone texts and student work and developing rubrics with students. Lessons give students clear expectations and information to improve their writing. • Independent work time that provides opportunities for students to write with clear intentions and purposes, as well as appropriately apply strategies and skills in their writing. Students write independently or discuss their writing with writing partners or in response groups. • Individual conferences or small writing groups that focus on intended learnings from mini-lessons or student needs. • Sharing time at end of workshops where specific students share parts of their writing, insights, and experiences that relate to or exemplify mini-lesson instructional foci.
	<p>Students take ownership in their process of becoming proficient writers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher encourages students to publish their writing. • As part of publishing and celebrating their writing, students write reflections about what they learned and respond to other students about their writing. 	<p>Students take ownership in their process of becoming proficient writers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher encourages students to publish their writing in a variety of ways. • As part of publishing and celebrating their writing, students write reflections about what they learned and respond to other students about their writing. • Students participate in writing community in which they actively engage in writing process and support classmates' efforts.

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Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher establishes literacy-rich classroom environment.	
	Approaching	Effective
Effective Classroom Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LE5: Classroom resources and space reflect and promote students and their learning LE6: Manages student groups, transitions, and resources effectively Masterful Content Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I9: Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards I10: Develops English language proficiency through instruction focused on language functions and forms I11: Uses native language instruction to develop strong content knowledge in L1 (this references lessons taught in Spanish, NOT English) 21st Century Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	<p>Teacher frequently implements Writing Workshop components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned mini-lessons (may include read-alouds and/or shared reading). Sharing time for closure at end of workshops. 	<p>Teacher implements 60–90-minute Writing Workshop components daily, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned mini-lessons (may include read-alouds and/or shared reading). Sharing time for closure at end of workshops.
	Classroom Arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom has appropriate space identified for whole group gatherings. Classroom libraries incorporate some student books. Classroom arrangement reflects mix of teacher- and student-directed interactions. 	Classroom Arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings (i.e., whole group, small groups, partners, independent work). Classroom libraries incorporate and highlight student books. Teacher encourages productive, accountable talk by arranging student desks and tables to emphasize student interactions.
	Classroom Displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and students refer to class-developed charts and rubrics that are posted or accessible. Classrooms and hallways frequently display student writing. Displays reflect most recent writing instruction. 	Classroom Displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students refer to a variety of class-developed resources when writing, including attribute charts, rubrics, word walls, and editing checklists. Teacher and students often refer to relevant, easy-to-read displays during discussions. Displays reflect current learning. Students can easily access writing examples from different genres by published authors and students. Classrooms, hallways, and classroom libraries routinely display and include student writing in meaningful ways to provide literacy opportunities, celebrate student accomplishments, and reflect big ideas of each writing cycle.

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Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher develops student independence and sense of community.	
	Approaching	Effective
Positive Classroom Culture and Climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LE2: Fosters supportive and respectful learning environment among students LE3: Motivates students to learn, take academic risks, and demonstrate classroom leadership Effective Classroom Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LE4: Implements high, clear expectations for student behavior and appropriately responds to misbehavior LE6: Manages student groups, transitions, and resources effectively Standards-Based Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I1: Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales I2: Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps I3: Supports student success with rigorous tasks 	<p>Teacher frequently articulates content and language objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher articulates clear learning objectives for lessons and discussions. Learning objectives are posted and evaluated at end of lessons. 	<p>Teacher articulates content and language objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objectives are posted, and students understand lesson purpose. Lessons and activities are designed to teach to those objectives, and objectives are evaluated at end of lessons.
	<p>Rituals and routines are established, and students frequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage their behavior with some teacher support. Know what is expected of them during work time. Maintain resources respectfully. Work well with writing partners for short periods. Move around the room to locate resources. 	<p>Rituals and routines are firmly established, and students routinely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the “why” behind rituals and routines and take responsibility to maintain them. Manage their behavior independently. Know what to do when they write and when they finish writing pieces, then do it. Understand how to move through the writing process. Maintain resources respectfully. Work well with writing partners and in small response groups, listening and responding appropriately. Move around the room without disruption to locate resources and confer with writing partners.
	<p>Teacher incorporates predictable behavior management system and uses contracts to support students, if needed.</p>	<p>Teacher incorporates predictable behavior management system and uses contracts to support students, if needed.</p>

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Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher provides effective whole group instruction in mini-lessons.	
	Approaching	Effective
Standards-Based Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I1: Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▶ I2: Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▶ I3: Supports student success with rigorous tasks High-Impact Instructional Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I4: Uses questioning effectively ▶ I5: Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons ▶ I6: Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning Differentiation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I7: Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs ▶ I8: Differentiates instruction according to students' levels of language proficiency Masterful Content Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I9: Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards ▶ I10: Develops English language proficiency through instruction focused on language functions and forms ▶ I11: Uses native language instruction to develop strong content knowledge in L1 (this references lessons taught in Spanish, NOT English) Academic Language Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I12: Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language ▶ I13: Ensures content is accessible for ELLs 21st Century Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I14: Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving ▶ I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	<p>Teacher makes some decisions about which mini-lessons to use from district resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPS Writing Units of Study. • <i>Units of Study for Primary Writing</i> by Lucy Calkins. • <i>Teaching the Qualities of Writing: Getting Started with Teaching the Qualities of Writing, Grades 3–6</i> by JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher. • <i>About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers</i> by Lisa Cleaveland and Katie Wood Ray. • <i>The No-Nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing: Strategies, Structures, and Solutions</i> by Judy Davis and Sharon Hill. 	<p>Daily mini-lessons are related and part of coordinated instructional focus, based on standards, assessed student needs and goals, and DPS Writing Units of Study and district curricular resources (including materials listed to the left in “Approaching” column).</p>
		<p>Unit pacing is based on district recommendations and purposeful planning based on student needs.</p>
	<p>Mini-lessons are typically 15–20 minutes long and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended learning statements and connections to previous learning. • Explicit demonstrations, think alouds, or explanations. • Active student involvement, with significant opportunities for accountable talk. • Student sharing. 	<p>Typically 15- to 20-minutes long, mini-lessons always include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended learning statements and connections to previous learning. • Explicit demonstrations (modeling), think alouds, or explanations. • Active student involvement, with significant opportunities for questioning and accountable talk. • Links to students' independent work. Students attempt to apply skills taught in mini-lessons during small group and independent work. • Student sharing linked to mini-lesson instructional foci.
	<p>Mini-lessons may address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identified purposes and audiences. • Inquiry and choice in writing. • Modes of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive, argumentative). • Genres of writing (e.g., poems, biographies, reports, letters). • Mentor text studies. 	<p>Mini-lessons address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identified purposes and audiences. • Inquiry and choice in writing. • Modes of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive, argumentative). • Genres of writing (e.g., poems, biographies, reports, letters). • Mentor text studies.
		<p>Teacher shelters mini-lessons to support English language learners and presents strategies and genres in a variety of ways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating writing in front of and composing with students. • Using teacher/student writing with rubrics to analyze writing elements and strategies. • Incorporating mini-lessons and touchstone texts aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. While giving mini-lessons, teacher uses SIOP techniques, including using visuals/realia, gesturing and acting out, having students repeat in their own words what they are to do, prompting students appropriately to respond at their language proficiency levels, and/or extending their language. • Frequent, multiple opportunities to interact with one another and use oral language purposefully during whole group, small groups, and independent time. During lessons, students engage in Think-Pair-Share, Turn and Talk, and other collaborative learning activities.

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Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher individualizes student instruction during small writing groups and conferences.	
	Approaching	Effective
<p>Standards-Based Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I1: Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▶ I2: Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▶ I3: Supports student success with rigorous tasks <p>High-Impact Instructional Moves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I4: Uses questioning effectively ▶ I5: Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons ▶ I6: Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning <p>Differentiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I7: Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs ▶ I8: Differentiates instruction according to students' levels of language proficiency <p>Masterful Content Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I9: Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards ▶ I10: Develops English language proficiency through instruction focused on language functions and forms ▶ I11: Uses native language instruction to develop strong content knowledge in L1 (this references lessons taught in Spanish, NOT English) <p>Academic Language Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I12: Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language ▶ I13: Ensures content is accessible for ELLs <p>21st Century Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I14: Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving ▶ I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	<p>Writing Conferences</p> <p>During writing conferences with students, teacher includes some of the following activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading student writing and/or asking questions about writing content or process. • Assisting students in applying information from previous mini-lessons. • Assessing student writing to determine future instructional goals. • Connecting to Skills Block instruction. 	<p>Writing Conferences</p> <p>Individual writing conferences raise students' writing levels by altering how students write after conferences. During frequent writing conferences, teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads some of students' own writing and ask questions that encourage students to talk about their writing process. • Based on students' questions and interests, decides what to teach or what to reinforce from recent mini-lessons. • Helps students reflect on their writing by talking with them about their writing process and setting goals for next steps. • Links conferences to students' independent writing and reading. • Reinforces one strategy or one concept clearly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Supporting students in using information from other mini-lessons. ✓ Connecting students to writing mentors. ✓ Providing guided practice, so students can try focused strategies with teacher assistance.
	<p>Small Writing Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher groups students flexibly, using instructional writing levels (and sometimes strategies) as determined by ongoing assessments (e.g., conferences, observations). • Teacher occasionally regroups students. • Small instructional groups focus on writing strategies and skills appropriate for students' instructional levels with awareness of student needs. • Teacher selects instructional foci as determined by writing conferences and ongoing assessments. 	<p>Small Writing Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher groups students flexibly, using instructional writing and language levels and analyzing strategies and skills, as determined by ongoing assessments (e.g., conferences, observations). • Teacher reflects on student needs and regroups accordingly. • Small instructional groups focus on oral language, writing strategies, and skills appropriate for students' instructional and language levels. Teacher deeply understands techniques students should employ to improve their writing. • Teacher selects instructional foci based on students' instructional and language levels and known words, strategies, skills, and concepts. Exemplars and touchstone texts provide opportunities to address lesson foci and individual and group needs. Teacher includes different modes and genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Sometimes texts might connect to Writing Workshop genres or content studies, but only if they appropriately support students.

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Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher uses writing artifacts and tools effectively.	
	Approaching	Effective
Standards-Based Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I1: Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▶ I2: Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▶ I3: Supports student success with rigorous tasks High-Impact Instructional Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I4: Uses questioning effectively ▶ I5: Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons Differentiation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I7: Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs ▶ I8: Differentiates instruction according to students' levels of language proficiency Masterful Content Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I9: Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards ▶ I10: Develops English language proficiency through instruction focused on language functions and forms ▶ I11: Uses native language instruction to develop strong content knowledge in L1 (this references lessons taught in Spanish, NOT English) Academic Language Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I12: Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language ▶ I13: Ensures content is accessible for ELLs 21st Century Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I14: Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving ▶ I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	Writing Notebooks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use writing notebooks to try mini-lesson strategies. 	Writing Notebooks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write frequently in writing notebooks to record things they notice, observe, and think about; try new strategies; or rework previously written pieces.
	Writing Files and Folders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have writing files and/or folders for in-progress and finished work. 	Writing Files and Folders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have system to organize their writing that allows them easy access to works-in-progress and storage for completed pieces they may revisit.
	Editing Checklists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have editing rules and/or checklists, but may use inconsistently or over-emphasize. 	Editing Checklists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use editing checklists as they reread their work to check list items and make appropriate changes.
	Touchstone Texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to use touchstone texts whenever they like. 	Touchstone Texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often refer to touchstone texts to anchor themselves to authors and texts they enjoy. • Highlighted sections of touchstone texts and examples of teacher and student writing are available as references to support students during Writing Workshops.

Best Practices in Elementary Writing Workshop Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher and students use assessment information to improve writing and learning.	
	Approaching	Effective
<p>Positive Classroom Culture and Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LE2: Fosters supportive and respectful learning environment among students LE3: Motivates students to learn, take academic risks, and demonstrate classroom leadership <p>Standards-Based Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I1: Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales I2: Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps I3: Supports student success with rigorous tasks <p>High-Impact Instructional Moves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I4: Uses questioning effectively I5: Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons I6: Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning <p>Differentiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I7: Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs I8: Differentiates instruction according to students' levels of language proficiency <p>Masterful Content Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I9: Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards I10: Develops English language proficiency through instruction focused on language functions and forms I11: Uses native language instruction to develop strong content knowledge in L1 (this references lessons taught in Spanish, NOT English) <p>Academic Language Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I12: Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language I13: Ensures content is accessible for ELLs <p>21st Century Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I14: Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving I15: Fosters communication and collaboration among students 	<p>Formal and ongoing informal assessments are used to inform instruction and monitor student progress and gathered into Body of Evidence (BOE) for each student. Student performance information is collected and analyzed in both L1 and L2, whenever appropriate.</p> <p>Informal assessments might include conference notes in assessment notebooks, annotated papers scored with rubrics, checklists (i.e., indicators of writing engagement, discrete skill acquisition), prompted writings or quickwrites, published pieces, portfolio contents, and teacher-developed rubrics and assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher makes frequent entries in assessment notebooks during writing conferences and small group writing instruction that reflect student progress toward goals. Teacher monitors students and differentiates for student needs. Teacher uses bodies of evidence to inform instruction, instructional interventions, and decisions about goals and next steps. 	
	<p>Formal assessments include grade-level or schoolwide prompted writing, writing performance tasks, CSAP, and DPS Interim writing assessments.</p>	
	<p>The following writing assessment practices are typically employed in Writing Workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher tracks student conferences. Teacher and students build attribute charts and rubrics for different writing genres, which students use to self-assess. Teacher use tools to assess student writing progress from beginning to end of year. Charts and rubrics sometimes incorporate illustrative icons. 	<p>The following writing assessment practices are employed in Writing Workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher maintains system that tracks conferences, what was discussed, and what students have been working on and uses this system to inform mini-lessons and small group instruction. Teacher and students create writing goals together. Teacher and students build attribute charts and rubrics together for each writing genre that inform students' writing assessments, revisions, and goal-setting for future writing. Teacher posts student writing samples and rubrics to demonstrate rubric components. Teacher uses rubrics from <i>Using Rubrics to Improve Student Writing</i> as a base for classroom rubrics. Teacher use a variety of tools to assess student writing progress from beginning to end of year. Teacher builds on students' strengths and connects to their background experiences and literacy knowledge in their first languages. All charts and rubrics are written with student input and in child-friendly language with visuals or icons to support meanings.